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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in response to resolution 50/130 of 20 December 1995, adopted on the basis of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system" (A/50/126-E/1995/20, annex) and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on that report (A/50/126/Add.1-E/1995/20/Add.1, annex).

2. The General Assembly, having considered the recommendations contained in the JIU report and the ACC comments thereon, by its resolution 50/130, inter alia, recognized the important role of communication for development programmes in the United Nations system in enhancing the transparency of system-wide coordination, in particular for the development of developing countries; encouraged the relevant organizations, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to use informal mechanisms such as round-table conferences, to improve communication for development programmes in the system; emphasized the need for the relevant organizations, agencies, funds and programmes to develop a systematic approach to capacity-building in the development of communication capacities, especially in the developing countries; invited the relevant organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as Governments and the regional commissions, to consider identifying focal points for the purpose of facilitating dialogue in the exchange of information

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on communication on issues related to development so as to strengthen coordination and international cooperation in this area; recognized the role of effective communication in disseminating the outcome and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and in ensuring the flow of such information to non-governmental organizations; and invited the Committee on Information, in accordance with its mandate, to consider this question at its forthcoming session. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in accordance with that agency's mandate in the field of communication, to report to the Assembly at its fifty-first session on the implementation of resolution 50/130.

3. The present report has been prepared on the basis of information and contributions provided by concerned organizations, agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions on their past, current and planned activities in the area of communication for development programmes, as well as on arrangements for cooperation and coordination of these activities with other organizations of the system.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

4. The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system welcomed General Assembly resolution 50/130 as a positive step towards a greater recognition within the United Nations family of the importance of communication for development. They have indicated that, in general, their activities and coordination arrangements in the area of communication for development are very much in line with the thrust of the resolution, as well as the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the subject.

A. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

5. The consideration of the JIU report and the ACC comments thereon by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session has served to further clarify the concept of communication as a management function for development policies in general, humanitarian assistance and peace-building programmes, as well as for all major activities of the United Nations system. The activities of UNESCO in particular, as the agency with principal responsibility for the communication area within the United Nations system, concentrate on the consideration of communication as a conceptual notion per se and require therefore an autonomous approach. The specificity and the potential of communication as a dynamic two-way process involving active popular participation make it an indispensable element for all development programmes, where dispensers and beneficiaries of technical assistance become main actors working towards the success of development projects and activities.

6. During its one hundred forty-sixth session, the Executive Board of UNESCO expressed its support of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the JIU report, particularly those related to public information and communication functions, coordination between communication operations at Headquarters and in the field, the participation of the beneficiaries of development and two-way communication strategies.

7. The activities of UNESCO in the area under consideration are, to a great extent, defined by the functioning within the agency of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), established in 1980, and are guided by its Intergovernmental Council. The mandate of the Council includes, inter alia, planning and implementing the International Programme; reviewing and assessing achievements and defining the basic areas requiring increased international cooperation; reviewing ways and means for more effective participation of member States in IPDC; and managing the issues of financing the implementation of the Programme.

8. The main objectives of IPDC, as laid down by the UNESCO General Conference at its twenty-first session, in 1980, are:

(a) To assist the developing countries, at their request, in the elaboration and implementation of their information and communication development plans, as well as in the identification of needs and priority areas;

(b) To promote in developing countries the creation or extension of infrastructures for the different communication sectors in order to increase their production of endogenous programmes and to promote improved international exchange of information;

(c) To carry out an analysis of technical and financial needs and resources in the fields of information and communication at the national and international levels;

(d) To provide consultative and advisory services to developing countries in the field of communication development;

(e) To ensure better coordination among the countries interested in the development of communication;

(f) To promote viable regional institutional arrangements for assistance to the Programme in pursuing its objectives;

(g) To obtain public and private funds to support communication development projects;

(h) To support, particularly among developing countries, the conclusion of arrangements on the exchange of information, and on cooperation and co-production between media organizations and journalists' associations;

(i) To take measures to promote the awareness of all parties concerned (be they developing countries, non-governmental organizations or other public or private bodies active in this field), of the important role that communication

plays in the development process, thus contributing to mobilizing the technical and financial resources needed for pursuing the goals and objectives of the Programme.

9. Since its establishment in 1980, the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC has approved 569 projects funded with almost $30 million from the special account. During its sixteenth session, in January 1996, the Council decided to give priority, in its future activities, to regional and subregional projects, and reaffirmed its support of projects aiming, in particular at improving the quality of communication for development; promoting freedom of the press, pluralism and independence of the media; promoting democracy and human rights; supporting activities for broader participation of women in the media; and developing community media etc. The Council decided to dedicate the next thematic debate, at its seventeenth session, in 1997, to the questions of the role, crisis and problems of the media in societies in transition and the role of freedom of the press and independence of the media in democracy.

10. At its 1996 session, the Council approved the amount of $2.3 million from the special account for the financing of 47 interregional, regional and national projects. The funds of the special account consist of voluntary contributions of member States.

11. One of the major activities of UNESCO for the near future that falls within the context of the recommendations contained in the JIU report, as well as of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/130, will be the sixth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, to be held at Harare, from 2 to 5 September 1996. It will focus on a specific country's development requirements, priorities, modalities, experiences and perspectives and seek to apply to the country situation and needs the combined experience of several agencies in the field of communication for development. The Round Table is expected to examine and discuss communication development projects that are managed at the national level by both public and private sectors, as well as by any of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The projects should include those that aim to catalyse development in any sector or combination thereof (agricultural development and food production, health, environment, education, population issues, children etc.) that use print, radio, television or traditional media, and that seek to catalyse changes at the grass-roots level, among people themselves, so that development takes root at the very heart of society. UNESCO is of the view that the benefits accruing from such a round table, as well as patterns of other cooperative experiences, will point the way to further inter-agency cooperation and open up possibilities for a broader pooling of agency resources, including financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and donor agencies and countries. The lessons learned and the methodology used in carrying out this Round Table could be applied region-wide to countries of similar socio-economic and cultural background, and eventually to other regions of the world. The results of the Harare Round Table will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly by UNESCO at the time of the consideration of the present report.

B. United Nations Secretariat

12. The activities of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, as the focal point for the public information tasks of the United Nations, are guided by the Committee on Information, in accordance with its General Assembly mandate. Among the core issues before the Committee on Information, since its inception in 1979, have been the strengthening of the communication capabilities of developing countries and the improvement of their communication technology and information infrastructure, particularly through training and information dissemination programmes. These issues, as highlighted also by General Assembly resolution 50/130, were specifically addressed in the two resolutions on questions relating to information, entitled "Information in the service of humanity" and "United Nations public information policies and activities", adopted by the Committee during its eighteenth session, in May 1996.

13. Also at its May 1996 session, the Committee on Information renewed its support for the continuation of the Department of Public Information/UNESCO-sponsored regional seminars on promoting pluralistic and independent media. Since 1991, four such seminars have been organized, namely, for the African media (Windhoek, 1991); for the Asian media (Alma-Ata, 1992); for the Latin American and Caribbean media (Santiago, Chile, 1994); and for the Arab media (Sana'a, 1996). The seminars were organized with the financial support of UNDP and involved other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and national development agencies. The next regional seminar for the European media will be organized by the Department, in close cooperation with UNESCO, in 1997.

14. Another area of the Department's activities of continuing importance is its training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, established by the General Assembly in 1980, to supplement national, regional and international training possibilities. The programme has since provided young journalists from developing countries with an opportunity to gain professional experience in covering the work of the General Assembly. During a period of six weeks, participants receive in-service training in public information activities, undertake professional work assignments, visit major media organizations and serve as United Nations correspondents covering meetings and events on behalf of their home media organizations. The Department's modest ability to increase the annual number of participants from all developing countries has been met, on many occasions, with the financial support of non-governmental organizations.

15. The Department of Public Information has played a pivotal role in the promotion of the recent cycle of major United Nations conferences on development issues and their follow-up. For these purposes, the Department has developed communication strategies and multimedia information programmes. Promotion materials on the outcome of each conference have been produced and distributed worldwide, primarily to media and non-governmental organizations. The issues related to the conferences and their follow-up continue to be included in the Department's ongoing information products, such as radio and television programmes and print products, and are being promoted by the United Nations information centres functioning in 68 countries throughout the world. In order

to develop and coordinate joint information activities for promoting follow-up to the conferences, special inter-agency task forces have been created by the Department. During 1996, these task forces met to coordinate joint information activities on poverty, women and human settlements as a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). It is also planned that, in 1997, a task force will meet on information activities relating to the five-year review of progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In its capacity as the secretariat of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), the Department ensures that the information activities in follow-up to the conferences are reported to and discussed by JUNIC at its annual meetings.

16. The activities of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in the area of communication for development have the objectives of strengthening the role of the United Nations as a forum for debate and consensus building in the economic and social areas and increasing awareness of the work of the Organization. They are mostly in the area of support to intergovernmental processes. The main constituencies targeted are the representatives of Member States at Headquarters and in the capitals, as well as non-governmental organizations as representatives of civil society. The Department is selecting and combining communication channels so as to maximize its reach to those audiences. Thus, its main products include a comprehensive on-line public-access site on the Internet, paper-based newsletters and publications, lectures, presentations and demonstrations.

17. The Department's Web site is designed to meet the information needs of delegations and participants: it is providing advanced information and texts of the parliamentary documentation of the economic and social bodies, and numerous links to other national and international sources of information. To reach those with no high-level Internet services like the Web, the Department maintains a gopher site with a comprehensive record of the proceedings of major conferences and other forums, and is in the process of developing an electronic document delivery service that will allow subscribers to receive automatically through e-mail electronic copies of documents as they are released. Furthermore, the information is systematically redisseminated through the networks of the members of the Association for Progressive Communication, which permits reaching the areas of Africa and Latin America where Internet is not yet widespread. There are currently half a million requests a year for the information posted by the Department.

18. The Department publishes eight newsletters on its main programme areas, such as sustainable development, women and social development, with a combined target readership of 30,000, primarily government officials and non-governmental organizations. Other activities include servicing the intergovernmental bodies to improve access to United Nations information; participating in the formulation of secretariat policies and strategies for electronic dissemination of information on the promotion of and follow-up to major international conferences and events, and on publications; and organizing numerous outreach events in conjunction with the main intergovernmental meetings it services. The Department is closely collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other partners in the development of common or compatible

electronic stores of information to track the progress in sustainable development.

19. Among other activities of the United Nations in the area of communication for development is the global dissemination by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of a wide range of development data and information in a variety of formats from print to CD-ROMs. The most notable area of activity is the Population Information Network (POPIN). During the past two years, the Coordinating Unit of POPIN located in the Population Division of the Department, has used the Internet to vastly expand the potential audience for population information and to rapidly, effectively and inexpensively disseminate information worldwide. Building on this success, POPIN is continuing to promote and facilitate the use of new information technologies to provide greater international access to regional and national population information. A major emphasis is put on capacity-building to enable the collection, analysis and dissemination of information by all countries and regions. POPIN thus serves as a communication structure for improving the interaction among the various actors in the population dimension of development.

C. United Nations funds and programmes

20. The United Nations Development Programme took the initiative in forging a new approach to communication for development when it adopted the New Corporate Communication and Advocacy Strategy in July 1995. This Strategy provides, inter alia, for UNDP to work closely with the Joint United Nations Information Committee at Headquarters and for the resident representatives/resident coordinators to play an enhanced role in communication at the country level. Through the role of the resident representative as the resident coordinator, UNDP, with the support of United Nations information centres where they are present, leads the system-wide effort at the country level to promote developmental and humanitarian programmes.

21. In spite of financial constraints, UNDP has placed additional emphasis on and allocated resources to communication, advocacy and information that address and interface with audiences in programme countries. Each of the 135 country offices is in the process of appointing an officer to be responsible for public affairs. The job description in each case emphasizes communication with benefiting communities, grass-roots organizations and local non-governmental organizations, as well as with national and foreign media and other partners. To give substance to the focus of the Advocacy Strategy at the country level, a series of training seminars is taking place in each region, attended by resident representatives, their deputies, national public affairs officers, and representatives of United Nations Information Centres, non-governmental organizations, the media and other development allies as participants or as resource persons.

22. At UNDP Headquarters, the Division of Public Affairs has been restructured in line with the New Corporate Communication and Advocacy Strategy, which resulted in gearing staff responsibilities more closely to supporting country offices in serving local audiences and constituencies.

23. In addition to traditional publishing, information and media relations, the weekly "Flash!" is produced as a medium to link UNDP internally throughout the world, as well as for the purpose of communicating with other agencies, non-governmental organizations, Governments and partners. Web home pages, databases, e-mail and other technological innovations are constantly being developed to multiply communication opportunities.

24. In December 1995, an initiative was jointly sponsored by the leaders of UNDP and the Department of Public Information aimed at strengthening collaboration between the Programme and the Department and overcoming common public information challenges. As a follow-up activity to this initiative, a new UNDP/Department of Public Information working group on United Nations Information Centres and public information matters has been established, which meets once a month. The working group was found to be a practical mechanism for reviewing common challenges that confront the integrated United Nations Information Centre offices, as well as specific country or regional situations that require special attention.

25. Within the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Policy Coordination and External Relations Service is the focal point for communication with regard to the organization's development activities. It ensures a wide dissemination of information on activities at the intergovernmental level, as well as on activities carried out by the secretariat in conjunction with technical cooperation for development. The Service publishes a quarterly, entitled UNCTAD Bulletin, which includes the above information, as well as information leaflets and handbooks on the work of the organization. UNCTAD also produces a guide on technical cooperation programmes entitled "Meeting the developing challenge".

26. Information on the activities of UNCTAD in the area of assistance to developing countries is made available to the media, as well as to the public at large, through its press releases and notes to correspondents. A number of specific technical cooperation projects, such as TRAINNAR, Trade Efficiency, TRAINFORTRADE, Ports Development, Insurance, Debt Monitoring and others, have their own information bulletins and leaflets containing updated reports on the type of activities undertaken. In addition, the UNCTAD Web site contains information on specific projects and recent developments at both the secretariat and intergovernmental levels.

27. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has consistently given prominence to the role of communication and social mobilization in its development programmes. The Fund was a founding member of the Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development and continues to actively participate in its deliberations. It has also developed several capacity-building projects in the area of communication for the benefit of developing countries, often with special donor funding. In order to improve and facilitate inter-agency cooperation in this field within the United Nations system, UNICEF has proposed to JUNIC the establishment of a subcommittee on communication for development, which, in its view, could become an appropriate forum for detailed follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/130.

28. The United Nations Environment Programme has initiated and maintained a number of activities to facilitate environmental data and information exchange for decision makers throughout the world. The main mechanisms for carrying out these activities are, in particular, INFOTERRA, Environment and Natural Resources Information Networking (ENRIN), the Global Resource Information Database (GRID) and UNEPNet.

29. INFOTERRA, the Global Environmental Information Exchange Network, is operating through 171 government-designated national focal points; a network of 8,000 sources of information, including national and international institutions, non-governmental organizations, industrial and commercial enterprises, academic institutions and experts; 34 special sectoral sources, and 10 regional service centres. INFOTERRA processes more than 50,000 queries per year.

30. The Environment and Natural Resources Information Networking is a programme instituted to promote the development of national and subregional capacities in data and database management to support environmental assessments and reporting in institutions of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The programme is operational in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.

31. The Global Resource Information Database, a decentralized network of centres, is providing and analysing geographic data sets, focusing on environmental and natural resources issues. Currently, there are 11 GRID centres worldwide, which have the ability, expertise, technology and mandate to prepare, analyse and present data and information about the Earth's resources as the basis for reliable environmental assessments.

32. UNEPNet is an integrated and open information system linking all UNEP information resources (INFOTERRA, GRID, International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals, United Nations Information Centres, Library etc. and UNEP national focal points). The system includes connection to the world at large through operational Internet, as well as World Wide Web connections through the MERCURE satellite system.

33. UNEP has no field representation and therefore has no informal communication mechanisms at the country level. Nevertheless, through its system of regional offices for Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and West Asia, it provides a continuous base for informal consultations and cooperation with other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in the respective regions. UNEP has assigned the Assistant Executive Director for Environmental Information and Assessment to serve as the focal point for facilitating dialogue in the exchange of information on communication issues related to development.

34. In April 1995, UNEP and UNDP signed an agreement regarding environmental information dissemination. The memorandum of understanding between the two organizations was designed to link, at the national level, the UNEP INFOTERRA network and the UNDP Sustainable Development Network Programme, enabling both networks to better deliver and exchange environmental information. The agreement will help to ensure cost-effective and efficient use of the limited United Nations funds and will enhance coordination. It will also enable UNEP

and UNDP to collaborate and share information systems and data, as well as to launch joint information projects in several countries (Cameroon, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Tunisia).

D. Regional commissions

35. Recognizing the importance of communication for the coordination of United Nations activities at the regional level, the regional commissions have developed a number of activities aimed at fostering better communication with their member States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic and business communities, as well as the media.

36. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has established close cooperation in the area of communication for development with such intergovernmental organizations of the region as the European Union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Council of Europe, as well as with subregional economic groupings. The ECE work on trade facilitation enables great savings on paperless trade for the wide range of its actual and potential users within and outside the ECE region. To develop appropriate software, the Commission participates in the work of the European Board for Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) standardization. The training of experts in the implementation of Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT) standards has also been pursued. A generic software tool for implementation of EDIFACT has been developed to cover the transition period until commercial software is available.

37. Electronic information exchange is used for the exchange, collection, dissemination and monitoring of statistical data and assistance to national statistical offices. The ECE has developed the generic statistical message (GESMES), allowing the exchanging parties to minimize the size of files transmitted through communication networks. At present, the Commission is developing tools and applications enabling the use of GESMES by international and national statistical offices. Some of the results of the ECE work, in particular the Economic Survey for Europe, is available on the Internet, and is open for access by the local missions of member Governments.

38. To cover a wide range of public information activities, the Commission is applying a multifold approach through regular briefings to its constituencies, some of which are available on the ECE home page on the Internet; press releases, which are sent to the Department of Public Information Bulletin Board and distributed also through the Internet; electronic data exchange etc. A list of Internet addresses of major media contacts is currently being established. Round table discussions are being organized on a regular basis in conjunction with the work of ECE intergovernmental meetings. Thus, for instance, the Round Table on Sustainable Industrial Development, held during the fifty-first session of the Commission in April 1996, gathered the chief executive officers of major international companies and has resulted in proposals concerning further strengthening of interaction with the business community.

39. ECE is continually updating the study on the telecommunication industry, entitled Growth and Structural Change, which was initially published in 1987. The Commission has been cooperating closely with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Europe Telecom 92 (Budapest), Asia Telecom 93 (Singapore), Africa Telecom 94 (Cairo) and Telecom 95 (Geneva).

40. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has elaborated a work plan in the area, which foresees the inclusion of information and communication technologies in the activities of the Commission as an important means to make known within the ECLAC region its diverse programmes and activities. To bring the product elaborated within this plan to users, the home page of ECLAC has been created. Progress in the accomplishment of the work plan will lead to concentrating on the coordination of the management of information resources of the Committee on Management of Information, the chairman of which will serve as the focal point of ECLAC in the area of communication for development.

E. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

41. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), being a pioneer in the field of communication for development, whose experience in rural communication has been recognized system-wide, has over the years applied a series of innovative methodologies for the information, motivation and training of rural populations. They include, inter alia, participatory rural radio, video for farmer training, and the use of traditional media for changing attitudes and behaviour. At present, it is addressing the appropriate use of new information technologies to support research, extension, communication and training activities to promote sustainable development. Recognizing that communication is an essential ingredient for sustainable development, related activities are now being implemented in the Research, Extension and Training Division of the Sustainable Development Department, while previously they were carried out by the Information Division. This confirms the substantive, technical nature of communication for development, which has as its objectives increasing people's participation and sharing of knowledge and skills, separate and distinct from public information activities. Within this new institutional framework, the unit responsible for communication for development activities provides communication support to all the substantive programmes of FAO. It emphases building up national capacity in communication for development and provides policy advice, technical assistance and training to member countries through field programmes. It also covers contacts at the inter-agency level.

42. The need for coordination of policies and exchange of experiences has been met by FAO through an informal network consisting of development communication specialists from United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and the private sector, who meet at the round-table conferences sponsored on a rotating basis by the participating institutions. The previous round table was organized by the Worldview International Foundation in Thailand in January 1995. The next one will be convened by UNESCO in September 1996. FAO fully supports the recommendation contained in the JIU report that funding agencies such as the World Bank and UNDP should participate in the round-table conferences on a more regular basis.

F. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

43. To provide wider access to information on its programmes and activities, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has set up a home page on the Internet, which has resulted in more efficient and effective dissemination of substantive information to Member States and other interested parties. UNIDO has also developed a systematic approach to providing training to end-users, such as the Industrial and Technological Information Bank, national focal points and the investment business community, information specialists, research and development staff and others, on the use of the Internet as a source of industry-related and business information at the regional level.

44. The training programmes are designed with capacity-building and the multiplier effect in mind and are implemented in close cooperation with UNESCO. So far, training programmes have been held in Moscow (May 1995) - for the Commonwealth of Independent States; Prague (September 1995) - for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; Santa Fe de Bogota (September 1995) - for Latin American countries; and Pretoria (February 1996) - for some African countries. This approach will be extended to other regions in cooperation with the relevant regional commissions. To facilitate dialogue in the exchange of information on communication regarding issues related to development, UNIDO has supported the initiative of ITU in launching an inter-agency project on universal access to basic communication and information services.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

45. The foregoing review of system-wide activities and coordination arrangements in the area of communication for development clearly indicates that the programmes and funds of the United Nations system have paid considerable attention to this key dimension of success in development programmes. A variety of pragmatic and working arrangements has been devised for cooperation and coordination among various parts of the system in this field. The most notable among these is the mechanism of inter-agency round tables, such as the one being organized by UNESCO in Zimbabwe. In addition, there are bilateral arrangements such as those between UNEP and UNDP to establish linkages between their information networks on environment and sustainable development. System-wide inter-agency mechanisms are also in place to promote coordination, including, most notably, the Joint United Nations Information Committee.

46. At the country level, the resident coordinator system as well as JUNIC field arrangements provide readily available mechanisms for promoting the integration of communication in development programmes and projects. However, as the JIU report on the subject (A/50/126) and the ACC comments on it (A/50/126/Add.1) suggest, a number of lacunae and gaps still remain. Some of the steps that could be taken to address them are outlined below:

Recommendation 1. The system needs to develop a common working definition and understanding of communication for development at the country level. This could be facilitated by the resident coordinator system in close collaboration with JUNIC arrangements in the field and should take fully into account the

results of the round tables on communication and development. Such a common working definition should provide a basis for defining more clearly the goals, processes and technologies that need to be pursued and shared among the concerned United Nations agencies and other development partners, with a view to maximizing the impact of development programmes at all levels.

Recommendation 2. The mechanism of informal round tables on communication for development should be used more systematically with the full participation of the international financial institutions at the country level. The experience gained on both substantive and methodological aspects should be disseminated more widely within and among regions, with a view to enhancing the application of communications as an essential tool for development.

Recommendation 3. Organizations of the United Nations system should assist Governments in carrying out careful analysis and assessment of the impact of new and appropriate technologies on and innovative methods for communication for development, with a view to developing sound application of such technologies and methods. Coordinated support and assistance for such analysis and assessment should be provided under the auspices of ACC through appropriate inter-agency mechanisms such as the ad hoc task forces for the follow-up to major United Nations conferences. The results achieved and experience gained should be brought to the attention of ACC and, through it to relevant intergovernmental bodies, as appropriate.

Recommendation 4. Resource mobilization remains an important objective for capacity-building in the area of communication for development programmes. This should be pursued as an integral component of the mobilization of resources for development programmes in general, as well as for humanitarian activities.

Recommendation 5. With respect to coordination at the Headquarters level, inter-agency mechanisms established for the coordination of programmes and operational activities, as well as for the follow-up to United Nations conferences, should incorporate the communication dimension in their efforts to coordinate the work of the United Nations system. This would involve the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Meeting on Women, their subsidiary bodies, JUNIC, the Information Systems Coordination Committee, as well as the inter-agency task forces established for the coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences.